1: Nadoa E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

132 The highest temperature measured in Bida was 106 in the shade, only
164 a few degrees lower than in the hottest (but driest) district of Nigeria, Bornu. The humidity of Bida, on the other hand, almost equals the humidity in the rain-forest belt. The combination of features from south and north which seems characteristic of Nupe country has its most unfavourable aspect in climatic conditions. The influence of the unfavourable climate upon the health of the natives is evident in the large proportion of people suffering from lung trouble and rheumatic diseases. Climate and soil combine to even more deadly effects: full of malaria-carrying mosquitoes, the river forests infested with tsetse-fly, and all watercourses polluted with bilharzia, Nupe is indeed an ill-favoured country.

231 The tsetse-infected areas have played their part in Nupe history. The forest belt in the south, of which the strips of river forest in Nupe are the northernmost outposts, marks the southern boundary of cattle and horse in Nigeria. The parts of Nupe which are free from tsetse are also safe for horses and cattle (more precisely, the northern breed of cattle, which is not immune from trypanosomiasis). Nupe country, with the neighbouring Ilorin—the southernmost country in which horses can be kept and to which the nomadic Fulani herdsmen can take their cattle—became also the southern outpost of the Fulani Empire, the southernmost stronghold of that race of cattle-people and horsemen whose spectacular conquest of Nigeria was stemmed only by the natural bulwark of the forest belt.

HEALTH AND DISEASE

164 In the Census of 1931 Nupe appears among the districts with the
732 highest proportion of blindness, leprosy, and insanity.[1] In the case of leprosy the Census estimate of over 5, and possibly over 10, per thousand is hardly exaggerated—even casual observation shows this, although the fear and secrecy that surround this disease among the Nupe make a more precise estimate impossible. Information which I obtained on the spot, from the Medical Officer in charge of Bida Native Administration Hospital, rather went to show that blindness is not more frequent in Nupe than elsewhere in Nigeria. As regards the proportion of insanity,
158 I have seen too few cases to venture any definite opinion. A remark on the nature of the mental disorders, however, may not be without interest. Of the five cases which I have seen three showed clear symptoms of paranoid schizophrenia—strongly delusional thinking, to the extent of persecution mania, combined with violent aggressiveness which appeared and subsided with marked suddenness, and involving no general degeneration of normal intellectual functions. Two cases were simple forms of imbecility.[2]

[1] *Census of Nigeria*, 1931 (London, 1933). The Census figures refer partly to the tribe, i.e. to random samples of Nupe (ii, pp. 110–11), partly to the political district of Bida Emirate (ii, p. 391), and partly to Niger Province as a whole ('Nupe Province' in the old terminology), the population of which consists to two-thirds of Nupe (i, pp. 41–2, ii, p. 38).

[2] See p. 402.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

Nupe education. No aspect of culture affords closer access to the paramount cultural motives and values. For education not only teaches openly the specific aims and conceptions of life accepted by the society, but reveals them also indirectly, in the motives and conceptions which it utilizes to call forth the desired response.

Is, then, the reverse equally true? is behaviour that does not conform to this conception of life met with public disapproval? One might indeed ask if Nupe culture did not reserve some legitimate place within its framework for individuals to whom its dominant trend was uncongenial, and who represent what some anthropologists have called 'deviants' from the type of personality which the society regards as so highly desirable.[1] I must admit that I have found no conspicuous instances of such 'deviant' types. But we can guess the public response towards such social or cultural 'failures' from certain occasional incidents: for an attitude that belies the upward trend, and this dynamic aspect of self-advancement, is indeed regarded as a 'failure'; such individuals would be dismissed by the people with a mental shrug—'*u de kokari à*', 'he makes no effort'. As the Nupe state undertakes to govern the moral life of the people and to co-ordinate rigidly their conceptions of right and wrong, so its education attempts a complete unification of types of personality.

Yet successful suppression in normal life may only mean that the 'deviant' type is forced into abnormality and will reveal itself in psycho-pathological cases. I have admitted in the first chapter the scantiness of data concerning mental disorders among the Nupe. But so far as they exist they seem to bear out the view that mental disorders in Nupe are largely symptoms of the failure of individuals to adjust themselves to the demands of the social environment. I have mentioned that the large majority of psycho-pathological cases that came to my notice presented the clinical picture of paranoid schizophrenia, with marked delusions and persecution-mania. Now modern psychiatry has shown that schizophrenia is essentially the result of inadequacy to a social environment. Indeed, in the few cases which I could examine more closely features of the social environment conspicuously entered the clinical picture. One man was under the delusion that he had been persecuted by a person of very high rank and robbed, through his intrigues, of his home and family; another maintained that intrigues against him at the court had cost him his land; a third case was that of an old man who was under the delusion that his younger brother (whom he admitted to be the more clever and successful of the two) was out to kill him. In creating these very specific delusions the psycho-pathological individual escapes from the consciousness of his own inadequacy. Though distorted and purely negative, the fears and anxieties which make up the delusion are the same fears and anxieties that accompany the successful mental adjustment to the *ethos* of Nupe life—the anxiety to 'get on' in the world, not to be left behind in the race for rank and position or the fear to lose the support of the 'powers that be', on whose influence one's career and safety depend. The border-line between normality and abnormality is that between

[1] Ruth Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, and Margaret Mead, *Sex and Temperament*.

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

anxiety and unceasing efforts to master reality or, conversely, the open admission of inability to live up to the exigent standards of the social *ethos*, and that complete withdrawal from reality and surrender to subjective emotional and thought-life which we classify as pathological.

Have we, as sociologists, to leave off here, and to regard the *leitmotif* of Nupe culture as an ultimate, irreducible, fact—as would be the view of certain modern schools of anthropology—or can we hope to trace it farther, and to correlate it, as we could most cultural traits, with other, more fundamental, social facts?

Not having examined in this book the whole field of culture, we can only venture on a tentative answer. But I believe that such a correlation is possible. The upward trend in social life is entailed in the class structure of the Nupe state; in the existence of a social *élite* which must both renew and widen its ranks by admission of selected groups from outside its sphere, and build its strength on a population whose motives and ways of thought are in conformity with its own aims. The particular form which the upward trend takes, that complex social ladder of many steps and grades, is part of the 'admission of selected groups'; it is explained by the necessity of controlling and canalizing the upward trend, lest it should endanger the position of the ruling group itself. The *ethos* of Nupe society does thus not represent a unique, irrational, and, as it were, autonomous cultural trend, but the product of an interdependence of phenomena which is open to rational interpretation. Behind it we perceive the public approval of forms of behaviour which are essential to the integrity of the class-organized state.

In reducing the *ethos* of Nupe culture to necessities involved in the social structure we have not merely reduced one unknown quantity to another. The class-state built upon, and expanding by, conquest is not a unique phenomenon, but a typical and regular occurrence in the history of society which we have learned to correlate with specific environmental and historical happenings. These themselves fall outside our range of vision: the environmental factors which made the river Niger the hotbed of powerful military states; environmental changes which have most probably started the tribal movements resulting eventually in conquests and the formation of states with an alien ruling class; political developments in the north of Nigeria which resulted in the Fulani conquests of the central kingdoms; or the historical changes in civilization which gradually led up to greater political concentration and the evolution of centralized states. I do not mean to defend an absolute determinism of this kind. I will not deny that Nupe culture may have added specific features of its own to this general development; it may well be that certain autonomous psychological determinants, not entailed in these external conditions, have played an important part in moulding the structure of the Nupe state and the psychological traits and motives which it has made its own. I have worked out elsewhere the principle of 'alternative solutions' of which a cultural adjustment to environmental and historical demands may admit.[1] In these alternative solutions we

[1] 'The Typological Approach to Culture', *Character and Personality*, v, No. 4, The Duke University Press, 1937.